



## Handy Guide for Grown-Ups

A balanced school lunch has at least 3 of the 4 food groups from Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. These are:

- Vegetables and fruit
- Milk and alternatives
- Grain products
- Meat and alternatives

When able, increase variety and pack foods like this from each food group:

- Dark green or orange vegetables like green peas, spinach, orange peppers, broccoli, carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato, or orange fruit like nectarines, apricots, cantaloupe or mangoes.
- Lower fat milk or milk alternatives like cheese, yogurt and unsweetened soy milk.
- Whole grains like whole grain bread, pita, or crackers, or brown and wild rice.
- Lower fat and nut-free meat or alternatives like eggs, beans and lentils or sunflower seed butter.

Making school lunches requires time and planning. Here are some tips to help you along:

- Include water, white milk or unsweetened soy milk as your child's main beverage.
- Provide a reusable water bottle so your child can fill it up at school.

- Include foods that are higher in nutrients like calcium, vitamin D and iron to help with growth and development.
- Use ice packs to help keep cold food cold.
- Use a thermos to help keep hot foods hot.
- When able, pack less-processed foods over highly-processed foods.
- If your child tends to be picky remember that new foods are learning experiences. Consider providing them with a couple of options but don't cater. The school provides the "when" and "where" to eat, and as the grown-up you provide "what" to eat. Your child decides on the "how much" to eat.
- You might want to add a little something special for example a note or a joke of the day to let your child know you are thinking of them while they're away at school.
- Consider involving your child by providing a list of tasty and nutritious foods and allowing them to choose what they would like that week before making a grocery list. You may even want to think about including them with grocery shopping, menu planning or assembling their lunches.

